



# Committee on **HOMELAND SECURITY**

Chairman Michael McCaul

## Opening Statement

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**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Susan W. Brooks (R-IN)  
Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications  
Committee on Homeland Security**

**“The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s FY2015 Budget Request: Ensuring Effective  
Preparedness, Response, and Communications”**

**Remarks as Prepared**

The House Homeland Security Committee recently held a hearing on the President’s Fiscal Year 2015 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), at which Secretary Johnson testified. This Subcommittee will continue that oversight today with a more in depth review of the President’s request for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The President’s FY2015 budget requests \$10.3 billion for programs and operations at FEMA. This is a 3 percent increase from the Fiscal Year 2014 enacted level. It is important that in these difficult fiscal times that FEMA can fulfill its missions while at the same time be a good steward of taxpayer money. We need to ensure that our nation is equipped to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate against disasters and ensure that our first responders have the training, tools and resources needed in order to continue to do their important work.

Administrator Fugate, I am interested in hearing more about how you propose to allocate resources to sustain FEMA’s current missions and what strategic priorities you will focus on in 2015.

For the third year in a row, the budget request proposes major changes within the State and Local Programs account, consolidating a number of homeland security grant programs into a new National Preparedness Grant Program (NPGP). I am pleased that FEMA has finally submitted a legislative proposal with this year’s request.

As the Subcommittee continues to review the proposal, we have a lot of questions. I am interested in learning more about many aspects of the proposal and how it would be implemented. I have questions about the two funding pots – sustainment and competitive – and how these funds will be allocated to states, high risk urban areas, port authorities, and transit agencies.

I also have questions about, and am concerned with, the proposed elimination of the 25% set aside for law enforcement terrorism prevention activities. State and local prevention activities, including the sustainment of the National Network of Fusion Centers, have played a vital role in our nation’s ability to disrupt a potential terrorist attack. Moving forward, we need to remember that the purpose of these grants, as detailed in the 9/11 Act, are for “preventing, preparing for, protecting against, and responding to acts of terrorism.”

I hope you will be able to provide us with greater clarity on these, and other, questions we have related to the NPGP proposal. I look forward to working with my fellow Subcommittee and Full Committee Members and the many stakeholder groups as we continue to review and consider this proposal. At this time I ask unanimous consent to insert a letter from a number of stakeholder groups, including the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the Major Cities Chiefs, and the International Association of Emergency Managers, regarding the NPGP proposal.

I was encouraged to see that the Department took advantage of the discretion provided by Congress for Fiscal Year 2014 Homeland Security Grant Program and expanded the number of cities eligible for Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding. After falling off the list in 2013, Indianapolis is once again an eligible urban area. The city of Indianapolis hosts many top-notch events, including the upcoming Indianapolis 500, that require our public safety officials to have the proper training, equipment, and strategic planning. Previous UASI funding has played a vital role in ensuring our first responders were prepared for these events.

As we continue to recover from disasters, such as Superstorm Sandy, we must evaluate how we are working to become more resilient and mitigate the damage caused by these storms. We also must ensure that we are always looking for ways to rebuild faster, stronger and more efficiently.

I was surprised to see that the President's budget request again proposes to eliminate the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program. However, it is my understanding that through the Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative proposal, \$400 million would be allocated to a competitive grant program that would be administered through the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program. I would like to hear more about the rationale behind this.

The use of social media has become a new reality for how first responders and survivors communicate before, during, and after a disaster. The recent explosion in East Harlem, the Boston Marathon Bombings, and Superstorm Sandy are just some examples of how citizens are turning to Facebook and Twitter for information and to comfort to survivors. During two Subcommittee hearings last year, we heard from numerous stakeholders, including the private sector, on this new reality. Two weeks ago I, along with the Ranking Member Payne, Vice Chairman Palazzo, and Mr. Swalwell, introduced a bill to authorize the Department's Virtual Social Media Working Group. I am interested in learning more about what FEMA is doing to incorporate social media into their preparedness, response, and recovery missions.

With that, I am pleased to welcome Administrator Fugate here today. I look forward to your testimony.

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